

SCRAPBOOK

for 1880

January 23

Shining light seen in Aristarchus, on the Moon, by Trouvelot.

March 22

Report from Kattenau, Germany. At about half an hour before sunrise "an enormous number of luminous bodies rose from the horizon, and passed in a horizontal direction from east to west."

This occurrence is described in *Nature*, Vol. 22, p. 64. "They shone with a remarkably brilliant light."

April 11

The monthly notices of the Royal Astronomical Society contains the following:

Mr. Swift, of Rochester, New York, observed an object in the constellation Ursa Major (Big Dipper) in RA $11^{\text{h}} 28^{\text{m}}$ and Declination 68° . He supposed it to be a faint comet. However, no motion was detected in one hour. It was not a nebula for it could not be found again after a period of bad weather.

May

This event which took place in May, 1880, is described in a letter published in *Knowledge*, December 28, 1883. "Seeing so many meteorological phenomena in your excellent paper, *Knowledge*, I am tempted to ask for an explanation of the following, which I saw when on board the British India Company's steamer *Patna*, while on a voyage up the Persian Gulf. In May, 1880, on a dark night, about 11.30 p.m., there suddenly appeared on each side of the ship an enormous luminous wheel, whirling around, the spokes of which seemed to brush the ship along. The spokes would be 200 or 300 yards long, and resembled the birch rods of the dames' schools. Each wheel contained about sixteen spokes, and, although the wheels must have been some 500 or 600 yards in diameter, the spokes could be distinctly seen all the way round. The phosphorescent gleam seemed to glide along flat on the surface of the sea, no light being visible in the air above the water. The appearance of the spokes could be almost exactly represented by standing in a boat

and flashing a bull's eye lantern horizontally along the surface of the water, round and round. I may mention that the phenomena was also seen by Captain Avern, of the *Patna*, and Mr. Manning, third officer.—"Lee Fore Brace."

P.S.—The wheels advanced along with the ship for about twenty minutes.—L. F. B.

(Subsequently there was some correspondence on the matter in *Knowledge*, and it transpired that the writer's real name was Mr. J. W. Robertson.—Ed.)

July 28

The *Louisville Courier-Journal*, July 29 and August 6, carried accounts of an unknown object that had been seen travelling in the sky, in several places, especially in St. Louis and Louisville. For example, on July 28, between 6 and 7 p.m., an object which moved in various directions, ascending and descending, seemingly under control, was seen by people in Louisville, U.S.A. When darkness came it disappeared.

Later, reports were received of an object seen in the sky at Madisonville, Kentucky. "It was something with a ball at each end." "It sometimes appeared in a circular form, and then changed into an oval. It passed out of sight, moving south." (How familiar and similar this description sounds to those of 1957!—Ed.)

July 30

St. Petersburg, Russia. Large circular luminous vessel followed by two smaller ones moving nimbly along a ravine. Visible for three minutes. Disappeared silently.

August 20

Brilliant white-gold cigar with pointed ends observed by M. Treul, of the French Academy. A smaller object is later seen to leave the parent craft, creating a trail of sparks in its weight.

November 30

Signor Ricco, of the Observatory of Palermo, was watching the sun at 8.30 a.m. in the morning when he saw, slowly crossing its disc, bodies in two long, parallel lines, and a shorter parallel line. (*L'Astronomie*, 1887-66.)